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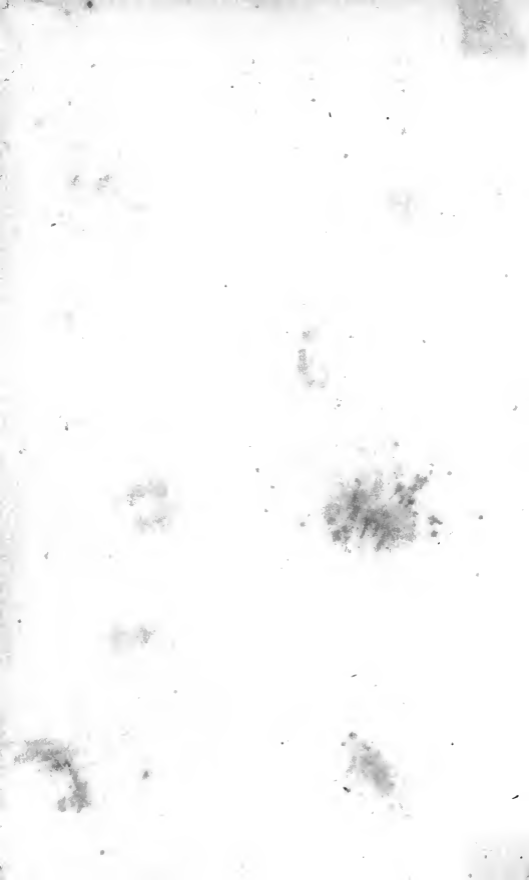
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Frontispiece.



See Pink Slippers, p. 19.

THE
PINK SLIPPERS;

OR,

CURE OF VANITY.

WRITTEN FOR THE AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION, AND
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THE PINK SLIPPERS.

BETSY CLARKE was the child of a pious mother, whose health was so much injured that she was unable to pay much attention to her little girl. The father was a moral, but worldly man; and though he wished his child to be amiable and correct, yet his chief desire was that she might appear well in the world. As his own heart was not changed by divine grace, it is not surprising that he set the greatest value on earthly rewards. The highest recompense which he ever offered his daughter for her good behaviour was some gay indulgence, or some new

piece of finery. It is not wonderful, therefore, that little Betsy, under such instruction and encouragement, should set her heart too much on dress.

There was an intimate friend of the family, whose name was Mrs. Preston. Knowing the feeble condition of Mrs. Clarke, this lady often sent for little Betsy to spend the day at her house, in company with a daughter about the same age. This was very pleasing to Mr. and Mrs. Clarke, for they perceived that their child was suffering for want of a playmate, and they knew that she would learn nothing that was bad from Sarah Preston. But Betsy herself was by no means equally pleased with these visits. She used to say, "Sarah is too sober and dull for me, and Mrs. Preston is too strict: I would much rather be with the Wartons."

This was the name of another family which was on terms of intimacy with those just named. They were very gay and fashionable. The four little girls were as fond of fun and of dress as Betsy herself; so that it was a delight for them to meet together. When Mr. Clarke made any present to his daughter, she was in a fever of anxiety until she could go over and show it to Elizabeth Warton.

It happened that Mr. Warton, with two of his neighbours, engaged a dancing-master to visit their houses in rotation, in order to teach the young misses. Betsy Clarke was impatiently desirous to take lessons also. This was opposed by her father, upon the ground that she was too young. But Betsy used to run over, as often as she could get leave, and see them dance. Poor inexperienced child!

how enviously she looked at the beautiful kid slippers which some of her playmates used on these occasions ! She really thought that her happiness would be complete, if she only had a pair of these kid slippers. So she did not let many hours pass, before she had asked her father to furnish her with some of the same kind. Mr. Clarke, who was very indulgent, accordingly bought her a pair of delicate pink slippers, such as she had never seen before.

Betsy's delight may be imagined by some of my young readers. Her first thought was to go over to Mr. Warton's, and show them to Elizabeth. But, on second thought she recollected that the girls were to dance what is called a *shawl-dance* the next evening, and that this would be a fine opportunity for her to surprise every

body with a sight of her fine shoes : “for,” said she, “I am sure they are grander than any in the whole school !” And here she held them up, and gazed upon them with indescribable satisfaction.

The first thoughts of Betsy Clarke, when she awoke the next morning, were about the new shoes and the shawl-dance. If she *said* her prayers, I am very sure her heart was not in them. If she had asked the Lord, in sincerity, to turn away her eyes from beholding vanity, it is probable that the events of the day would have been quite different. As it was, she could think of nothing but her finery, and the display which she was about to make among her companions. She scarcely knew how she was ever to get through the long, long day.

As soon as breakfast was over, she

asked her parents to let her go and see the Wartons. "My dear child," said Mrs. Clarke, "you remember I have promised Mrs. Preston that you should go over and spend this day with Sarah?"

At these words Betsy's countenance fell. Her disappointment was extreme, and it was with the greatest difficulty that she kept herself from bursting into tears : as it was, a number of drops trickled down her cheeks. Mrs. Clarke observed this, and said, with a sigh, "Betsy, my love, I am sorry to see that you dislike my good friend Mrs. Preston, and her little girl. Sarah is a sweet and dutiful child, and I am pleased to see you together. My declining health, as you very well know, does not allow me to be always with you, and to give you the instructions which you need. And when I am

gone, which may be very soon, I should feel contented to leave you with such a friend as Mrs. Preston."

This was too much for poor little Betsy. Thoughtless as she was, she really loved her mother very dearly, and could not bear to hear her speak of dying. She began to sob violently, and said, "Dear mother, do not talk so! You will not die, you will not die and leave me!"

"My dear child," said Mrs. Clarke, "I do not wish to distress you, but I feel that you will soon be motherless; and I fear you are not at all prepared for such an affliction. Perhaps we have done wrong in allowing you to be so much with the Wartons."

"Why mother," said Betsy, "what is the matter with the little Wartons?"

"They are amiable and clever children," replied Mrs. Clarke, "but they

have never been taught to love their Saviour; and, so far as I can learn, they think of nothing but worldly pleasure and dress."

"But, mother," said Betsy, "you would not wish little girls to be as grave as old people."

"No, my dear; but you are quite old enough now to serve your Maker. You are old enough to consider how kind he has been to you, all your life, and, above all, how great is his mercy in giving his Son to die for sinners. O, my dear girl, if I could know that you had believed in that blessed Saviour, I could leave you almost without a sigh."

Here Betsy's tears broke forth anew, and she said, as she threw her arms around her mother's neck—"O! my dear, dear mother—do not talk in that way any more! You will not

die—I know you will not die! I will try to be good, and to please you; I will, indeed.”

Mrs. Clarke was too much exhausted to say any more, at that time; so she told Betsy that she might go down and water the flowers. The little girl did this, with a sad heart, and for a while forgot the shoes and the Wartons. “Poor mother!” she said to herself, “how much she loves me! How pale and sweet she looks! But she will not die—I know she will not die. I will try to be good; it will make mother happy. I am determined to be good.”

Poor child! like most in her circumstances, she could not believe that her mother would really die; and, in her own strength, she was resolved to be good; having no other motive than to make her mother happy. Alas!

she had no proper knowledge of the evil of her heart. The griefs of children are of short duration. Betsy soon dried her tears, and was humming a favourite tune, when she heard some one passing. Upon running to the window, she perceived that it was her friend Lucy Smith, on her way to the dancing-school. Betsy's first childish thought was to look at Lucy's shoes : "They are new," thought the vain girl, "and they are kid, but they are not near so pretty as mine. O ! I had forgotten all about the shawl-dance. How I wish that shocking Sarah Preston lived in some other town ! I don't see why mother cannot let me go to Mr. Warton's. I am sure there is no great harm in dancing ; and father says he means to have me taught when I am older. But I am quite old enough now ; for there

goes that proud Lucy Smith, in her new shoes ; and she is no older than I am."

Then she remembered her pink slippers once more, and thought they looked more beautiful than ever. " O dear, O dear !" cried she, " I must get to Mr. Warton's, in some way or other. Lucy shall not look again so scornfully at my old black shoes. And, besides, Elizabeth says there never was any thing half so splendid as this shawl-dance ; and if I slip off to see it, mother will think I am at Mr. Preston's."

With these bad thoughts in her mind, she forgot all her good resolutions, and determined, if she should be questioned on her return, to say that she had been at Mrs. Preston's. When she went into the next room, she found her father leaning over the

pillow of her sick mother, and bathing her pale temples with cologne water. You might readily suppose that such a sight would have brought back all her tender feelings; but no, her heart was given up to vanity, and was in such a state of selfish excitement, that her only concern was lest she should be disappointed in her darling plan.

“My dear,” said Mrs. Clarke; in a weak and sorrowful tone, “I supposed you had already gone to Mrs. Preston’s: it is getting rather late.”

“Yes, mother, I am just going, but I have left something under this table.”

The artful little girl thought that by creeping under the large table, she might get possession of the new shoes without being observed, as they were in the lowest drawer of a bureau. If

Mr. Clarke had not been taken up with attentions to his wife, he would certainly have discovered the artifice; but, as it was, he took no notice of it. When Betsy came from under the table, her father asked her whether she had found what she was looking for. "Yes, sir," said she, "and I am going to Mrs. Preston's." Her heart beat violently, as she uttered this untruth, at the same time hiding the slippers under her apron. She was afraid to remain another moment in the room.

"Betsy," said Mr. Clarke, "somebody had better go with you. Ask Maria to go, and finish her work when she comes back."

"O, no, sir!" said she, very much alarmed, "it is but a step—and I know the way."

"Very well, my child; be sure to

behave yourself well, and come home in good time."

Betsy hastened to the room where her clothes were kept, and exchanged the merino stockings, which was the sort she had worn all winter, for a silk pair; in order to show off her new slippers to the best advantage. In a very few minutes she was knocking at Mr. Warton's door.

"O! Betsy," exclaimed Elizabeth, who ran to receive her, "what makes you so late? We had just given you up, and were ready to begin. But what is this?—you look pale and weak—are you unwell?"

"No, but I have walked so fast that I should like to rest a moment, before I go into the dancing-room."

While Betsy was arranging her dress, Elizabeth said, "Where in the world did you manage to get these

superb shoes? Mother looked all over town for a pair of that colour, but there were none to be had."

"Father sent to Philadelphia for them," said Betsy; "but do you really think they are prettier than Lucy's?"

"O! her's are not to be named the same day; how glad I am you have them on! Do you know, I always hated Lucy Smith? I long to see her mortified; and she will be angry enough when she finds what you have got. And, besides, Lucy says her mother will not let her wear silk stockings in winter."

Betsy blushed to think how justly her own mother would be displeased at her imprudence in this matter, but childish vanity and a little malice were now ruling in her mind. The tempter had begun to gain a sad dominion over her youthful heart.

“Come along, Betsy,” said her companion, “let us hurry into the room and have a little display ; for I see the master has stepped out a moment. — Look here, girls,” said she, as she led the vain little creature into the room, “what a splendid slipper ! Was there ever any thing so perfect ?”

This had the intended effect on Lucy Smith, who was a conceited girl, and was provoked at being eclipsed by any one. While the others exclaimed, “How beautiful ! how lovely !” Lucy pouted and reddened, and said in a peevish tone, “This is a great matter, to be sure, to make such a fuss about ! But I can tell you one thing, — my cousin, who is just from New York, says that slippers are out of fashion, and I shall not wear them any more, for my part. I will have gaiter-boots.”

“Who ever heard of dancing in gaiter-boots?” cried several of the girls at once, with a loud laugh.

“I will not stay here to be laughed at,” said Lucy; “I will go home and tell my mother how I have been treated.”

Just as she was leaving the room, she was met by the dancing-master, who with some authority directed her to take her seat, and she did not venture to disobey. All this filled Betsy with a wicked triumph, which she expressed to those around her. Such is human nature, and such are the feelings of men and women, who are all “children of a larger growth;” though they are more artful in the concealment of their pride and envy.

While the children were going over their first lessons, which were very familiar to Betsy, she had a little time

for reflection. "What," thought she, "would my father and mother say, if they knew I was here? They will never find me out:—but what if father should go to Mr. Preston's? O! I wish I had not come!—But, then, how nicely I have served Lucy—and all the girls envy me in their hearts. I do not see one of them dressed so well as myself.—When will they begin to dance? My feet are as cold as ice; I wish I had minded my mother's advice about the stockings.—O dear! it seems to me that I don't feel as happy as I expected. Poor dear mother! suppose she should die and leave me:—but I can't think of that—I know she will not die—"

Just then she was startled by a tap on her shoulder from Elizabeth, who said, "Why, Betsy, what can be the matter with you? You look as if you

were in church: I must have your help to fasten my scarf."

Betsy endeavoured to cheer up, but it was only in appearance. Her heart was sad, and her conscience was at work. Every time the door opened, she trembled lest her father should come in. "This dance," thought she, "is not such a great thing, after all. I wish I was at home!" And she would have gone home as soon as the dance was over, but she was afraid her father would find out that she had not been at Mr. Preston's.

Thus it is, that even children find out the truth of that verse in the Bible, *The way of transgressors is hard*. Wicked people suffer a great deal while they are committing sin. Poor Betsy found it so. My young reader, when you have done what is wrong, and begin to feel sorry for it,

make no delay ; go and make humble confession at once. In this way you will be saved from much distress of mind.

Betsy thought, by staying until the time when her father would expect her from Mrs. Preston's, that she should escape detection. There were many nice refreshments offered to her, but she had no heart to touch them. It had been damp and cloudy all day, but just before it was time for her to go home, some one came in and said that a black cloud was coming over, and that it would rain in a few moments.

"O! O!" exclaimed Betsy, "what will become of me! I must go home before it rains—indeed I must."

"Don't think of such a thing," said Elizabeth; "you will be caught in the rain."

“Never mind—I *must* go—I can run all the way. I beg—I pray—get me my things!” And here she seemed agitated in a high degree.

“Why, Betsy, I never saw you act so strangely before. You have often seemed pleased to be kept here by the rain : but you have not looked like yourself to-day. Has any one offended you ? Are you afraid for the new slippers ?”

“O do not name the slippers,” said she, bursting into tears ; “dear Elizabeth, do not keep me ; the rain will come on while we are talking.”

Betsy made as much haste as possible, but before she got down to the door, the rain came down in torrents. “O ! what shall I do ?” said she, wringing her hands in excessive distress. “Why, if you are so very anxious,” said Elizabeth, “I will ask

mother to send you home in the carriage."

"O, no! I beg that you will not. I will try to stop crying. Do you think it will rain long?" "I heard father say," said Elizabeth, "that it would be only a shower?" "Then I can go as soon as it ceases. Girls, can you lend me a book to read?" For she had no desire to play.

"Here are books in abundance," said her companion, "but I should really like to know what makes you conduct so oddly to-day. Perhaps you begin to feel above us, with your fine clothes and your French slippers?"

"Please do not be angry with me," said the wretched girl; "I do not care a pin for the slippers, and I am sure I love you all very much; but I want to see my poor dear sick mo-

ther." And here she had another fit of crying.

"Well," said the other, "I am sorry I spoke so sharply; but I tell you again, mother will send you home in the carriage."

"O, no, I thank you; I think by the time I get my things on, it will stop raining—it is almost over now. If you will lend me a pair of thick shoes, I shall be at home in a few moments." Her heart grew lighter as the rain ceased, and she bade them farewell with some glee; but, just as she opened the front door, she was met by one of her father's servants, coming up the steps. "Have you come for me?" asked the trembling girl. "Yes, Miss Betsy; your father has sent for you; and he is angry enough with you, I can tell you." Betsy said no more just then, lest the Wartons should

discover her deception. But when they got into the street, she inquired, "How did you know where I was?"

"Why, miss, your father sent to Mr. Preston's as soon as ever he saw the dark cloud. Mrs. Preston said you had not been there at all; and so your father supposed you had gone to see the Warton's, as you had asked his permission to do so this morning."

All the way home, Betsy could scarcely speak for sobbing. How sincerely she wished that she had not grieved her parents! How earnestly she resolved never to do wrong again! "But," thought she, "I never shall be good. Only this morning, I resolved to obey my dear mother—and yet how wicked I have been! I am afraid to see my father and mother O! what shall I do!"

On reaching home, she was met by some one at the door, and was directed to step very softly, and not to go up stairs; because her mother had been suddenly taken worse, and the physician was afraid she would not live through the night. Here it seemed as if poor Betsy's heart would break. She threw herself into the arms of the attendant, and said, "O! cannot you take me to my mother? Only let me tell her how wicked I have been. Will she ever forgive me. Must she die? O! must my dear, dear mother die?" With such entreaties she continued for some time to address those who were about her.

Mr. Clarke, however, had given orders that no one should be admitted into the chamber. Poor Betsy cried again and again—"O! let me go in! O, if mother would only forgive me!

O, if she would forgive me !” They tried to comfort her, but in vain. At length a bell rang, and Betsy was left alone. The poor child hid her face in the corner of a sofa, and sobbed until, from mere weakness, she fell asleep.

There was indeed good reason for Betsy’s alarm. Her mother was in great danger, and continued to grow worse. This took up the attention of the family so completely, that they never thought of Betsy, till at length her father, seeing where she was lying, ordered her to be taken to bed. Alas ! the little girl did not know the greatness of the calamity which befell her during the time of her sleep : for her dear mother died that night. And when Betsy was awakened, it was by a violent attack of croup. This was a disease to which she was subject,

and it was probably brought on by her imprudence in wearing the thin stockings, and in sleeping upon the sofa. She was very ill all night. The physician, was at one time afraid that this attack might end her life ; but towards morning the symptoms of croup were removed. However, the remedies which had been used were so violent, that she was thrown into a high fever. For nine days she was delirious, so that she did not know any one. She talked continually about her mother, and begged her forgiveness. She was tenderly waited on by Mrs. Preston and Sarah ; indeed the doctor said that she owed her recovery to the blessing of God upon their attentions.

On the morning of the tenth day, as her kind young friend was bathing her temples, she looked up and said,

very feebly, " Sarah, are you here ? Where am I ? Where is mother ? " Sarah was too much delighted to answer, and ran immediately to tell her mother and Mr. Clarke. From this time she began to recover slowly. Nothing could exceed the kindness of Mrs. Preston and Sarah ; and Betsy would often blush when she remembered how much she used to dislike these good friends. Mr. Clarke saw that Sarah had been sufficiently punished for her faults ; so he never mentioned them. Besides, he never looked at the dear child without being ready to weep, at the thought of her great danger, and her great bereavement. But Betsy did not forget her sin. For years afterwards, whenever she was tempted to be vain of any new thing, she thought of the slippers and was humbled.

I will not attempt to describe the dismay of this poor child, when she was told that her dear mother was no more. Of course they kept the painful tidings from her, until she was almost well. It was very difficult, however, to do this, for scarcely an hour passed, after she began to recover, that she did not make some inquiry about her mother. And when, by degrees, she came to know the extent of her loss, her agitation was frightful. She lamented day after day, and charged herself with all the sin of her undutiful behaviour.

Mrs. Preston prevailed on Mr. Clarke to let him take charge of the motherless child, and through that excellent woman's instrumentality, Betsy became a truly pious girl. In the remainder of her life she made it her daily prayer that the Lord would

turn away her eyes from beholding vanity: and if this little story should lead any young reader to follow her example, it will not have been written in vain.

THE END.











